



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Applications for New Awards; American Overseas Research Centers Program

AGENCY: Office of Postsecondary Education, Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Education is issuing a notice inviting applications for fiscal year (FY) 2024 for the American Overseas Research Centers (AORC) program, Assistance Listing Number 84.274A. This notice relates to the approved information collection under OMB control number 1840-0006.

DATES:

Applications Available: [INSERT DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

Pre-Application Webinar Information: The Department will hold a pre-application webinar for prospective applicants. Detailed information regarding the webinar, including date and time, will be provided on the website for the AORC program at <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/iegpsaorc/applicant.html>.

Additionally, for prospective applicants that have never received a grant from the Department and those that are interested in learning more about the process, please review the grant funding basics resource at <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/funding-101/funding-101-basics.pdf>.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: [INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: For the addresses for obtaining and submitting an application, please refer to our Common Instructions for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs, published in the *Federal Register* on December 7, 2022 (87 FR 75045) and available at www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/12/07/2022-26554/common-instructions-for-

applicants-to-department-of-education-discretionary-grant-programs. Please note that these Common Instructions supersede the version published on December 27, 2021.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Cheryl E. Gibbs, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, room 5C103, Lyndon Baines Johnson (LBJ) Building, Washington, DC 20202. Telephone: (202) 453-5690. Email: cheryl.gibbs@ed.gov.

If you are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability and wish to access telecommunications relay services, please dial 7-1-1.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Program: The AORC program provides grants to consortia of institutions of higher education (IHEs) in the United States to establish or operate an overseas research center (Center) to promote postgraduate research, exchanges, and area studies. AORC grants may be used for all or a portion of the costs to operate and maintain the overseas Center; organize and manage conferences; develop or acquire teaching and research materials; acquire or preserve library collections; bring scholars and faculty to the Center to teach or conduct research; support the salaries for Center staff and visiting faculty and professional development stipends and fellowships; pay the travel costs for Center staff and project participants; and to publish and disseminate materials for the academic community and the public.

Priorities: Under this competition we are particularly interested in applications that address the following priorities.

Invitational Priorities: For FY 2024 and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition, these priorities are invitational priorities. Under 34 CFR 75.105 (c) (1), we do not give an application that meets these invitational priorities a competitive or an absolute preference over other applications.

These priorities are:

Invitational Priority 1—Professional Development Opportunities for Participants from Community Colleges, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and Minority Serving Institutions.

Projects that provide professional development opportunities to participants from community colleges, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and Minority-Serving Institutions. The opportunities may be provided domestically or overseas and may include curriculum development workshops to create new courses or to incorporate global content and competencies into existing courses, language instructional programs for the beginning to advanced levels, or participation in academic conferences relevant to the Center’s focus.

For the purpose of this invitational priority—

Community college means “junior or community college” as defined in section 312(f) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA) (20 U.S.C. 1058(f)); or an “institution of higher education” as defined in section 101 of the HEA, that awards degrees and certificates, more than 50 percent of which are not bachelor’s (or an equivalent) or master’s, professional, or other advanced degrees.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities means colleges and universities that meet the criteria set out in 34 CFR 608.2.

Minority-Serving Institution means an institution that is eligible to receive assistance under sections 316 through 320 of part A of title III, under part B of title III, or under title V of the HEA.

Note: The institutions currently designated eligible under title III and title V of the HEA may be viewed at the following link: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/itudes/eligibility.html>.

Invitational Priority 2—Open Access to Center-related Research, Instructional, and Scholarly Resources.

Projects that provide open access to Center-related research studies, conference proceedings, online libraries, digital archives, instructional materials, scholarly publications, and other resources related to the scholarly and cultural foci of the Center.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1128a and 1132-1132-7.

Note: Projects will be awarded and must be operated in a manner consistent with the nondiscrimination requirements contained in Federal civil rights laws.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations in 34 CFR parts 75, 77, 79, 81, 82, 84, 86, 97, 98, and 99. (b) The Office of Management and Budget Guidelines to Agencies on Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) in 2 CFR part 180, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3485. (c) The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards in 2 CFR part 200, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3474.

Note: The regulations in 34 CFR part 86 apply to IHEs only.

II. Award Information

Type of Award: Discretionary grants.

Estimated Available Funds: The Department estimates that \$1,347,635 will be available for new awards in the AORC program in FY 2024. The actual level of funding, if any, depends on final congressional action. However, we are inviting applications to allow enough time to complete the grant process before the end of the current fiscal year, if Congress appropriates funds for this program.

Contingent upon the availability of funds and the quality of applications, we may make additional awards in subsequent years from the list of unfunded applications from this competition.

Estimated Range of Awards: \$53,000- \$82,000 for each budget period of 12 months.

Estimated Average Size of Awards: \$58,000 for each budget period of 12 months.

Estimated Number of Awards: 17.

Note: The Department is not bound by any estimates in this notice.

Project Period: Up to 48 months.

III. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants: Consortia of United States (U.S.) IHEs that receive more than 50 percent of their funding from public or private U.S. sources, have a permanent presence in the country where the Center is located, and are organizations described in section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, which are exempt from taxation under section 501(a) of such Code.

Note: If you are a nonprofit organization, under 34 CFR 75.51, you may demonstrate your nonprofit status by providing: (1) proof that the Internal Revenue Service currently recognizes the applicant as an organization to which contributions are tax deductible under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code; (2) a statement from a State taxing body or the State attorney general certifying that the organization is a nonprofit organization operating within the State and that no part of its net earnings may lawfully benefit any private shareholder or individual; (3) a certified copy of the applicant's certificate of incorporation or similar document if it clearly establishes the nonprofit status of the applicant; or (4) any item described above if that item applies to a State or national parent organization, together with a statement by the State or parent organization that the applicant is a local nonprofit affiliate.

2. a. Cost Sharing or Matching: This competition does not require cost sharing or matching.

b. Indirect Cost Rate Information: This program uses an 8 percent restricted indirect cost rate. For more information regarding indirect costs, or to obtain a negotiated indirect cost rate, please see www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocfo/intro.html.

c. Administrative Cost Limitation: This program does not include any program-specific limitation on administrative expenses. All administrative expenses must be reasonable and necessary and conform to Cost Principles described in 2 CFR part 200 subpart E of the Uniform Guidance.

3. Subgrantees: A grantee under this competition may not award subgrants to entities to directly carry out project activities described in its application.

4. Build America, Buy America Act: This program is not subject to the Build America, Buy America Act (Pub.L. 117-58) domestic sourcing requirements.

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. Application Submission Instructions: Applicants are required to follow the Common Instructions for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs, published in the *Federal Register* on December 7, 2022 (87 FR 75045) and available at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/12/07/2022-26554/common-instructions-for-applicants-to-department-of-education-discretionary-grant-programs>, which contain requirements and information on how to submit an application. Please note that these Common Instructions supersede the version published on December 27, 2021.

2. Submission of Proprietary Information: Given the types of projects that may be proposed in applications for the AORC grant competition, your application may include business information that you consider proprietary. In 34 CFR 5.11 we define “business information” and describe the process we use in determining whether any of that information is proprietary and, thus, protected from disclosure under Exemption 4 of the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552, as amended).

Because we plan to post on our website the abstracts of all funded applications, you may wish to request confidentiality of business information.

Consistent with Executive Order 12600, please designate in your application any information that you believe is exempt from disclosure under Exemption 4. In the appropriate Appendix section of your application, under “Other Attachments Form,” please list the page number or numbers on which we can find this information. For additional information please see 34 CFR 5.11(c).

3. Intergovernmental Review: This program is subject to Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR part 79.

4. Funding Restrictions: We reference regulations outlining funding restrictions in the Applicable Regulations section of this notice.

5. Recommended Page Limit: The application narrative (Part III) is where you, the applicant, address the selection criteria that reviewers use to evaluate your application. We recommend that you (1) limit the application narrative to no more than 30 pages and (2) use the following standards:

- A “page” is 8.5" x 11", on one side only, with 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides.
- Double space (no more than three lines per vertical inch) all text in the application narrative, including titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions, except the text in charts, tables, figures, and graphs.
- Use a font that is either 12 point or larger or no smaller than 10 pitch (characters per inch).
- Use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Arial.

The recommended page limit does not apply to Part I, Application for Federal Assistance cover sheet (SF 424); the Supplemental Information Form SF 424B; Part II, ED 524 (Summary Budget A) and the detailed budget justification (Summary Budget C); or Part IV, assurances, and certifications. The page limit also does not apply to the one-page abstract, the curriculum vitae, the bibliography, or the letters of support. However, the recommended page limit does apply to the entirety of the application narrative.

V. Application Review Information

1. Selection Criteria: The selection criteria for this competition are from 34 CFR 75.210. The total maximum score for the selection criteria is 100 points. The maximum number of points for each criterion is indicated in parentheses.

The Secretary evaluates all applications for a project under this program using the following criteria:

(a) Need for project (up to 20 points).

(1) The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project.

(2) In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the magnitude of the need for the services to be provided or the activities to be carried out by the proposed project. (up to 20 points)

(b) Quality of the project design (up to 10 points).

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable. (up to 5 points)

(ii) The extent to which fellowship recipients or other project participants are to be selected based on academic excellence. (up to 5 points)

(c) Quality of project services (up to 25 points).

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project, the Secretary considers the quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. (up to 5 points)

(3) In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project are appropriate to the needs of the intended recipients or beneficiaries of those services. (up to 10 points)

(ii) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services. (up to 10 points)

(d) Quality of project personnel (up to 15 points).

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. (up to 5 points)

(3) In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director or principal investigator. (up to 5 points)

(ii) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel. (up to 5 points)

(e) Adequacy of resources (up to 15 points).

(1) The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project.

(2) In determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources, from the applicant organization or the lead applicant organization. (up to 5 points)

(ii) The extent to which the budget is adequate to support the proposed project. (up to 5 points)

(iii) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and to the anticipated results and benefits. (up to 5 points)

(f) Quality of project evaluation (up to 15 points).

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The extent to which the methods of evaluation are appropriate to the context within which the project operates. (up to 5 points)

(ii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project. (up to 5 points)

(iii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide timely guidance for quality assurance. (up to 5 points)

2. Review and Selection Process: We remind potential applicants that in reviewing applications in any discretionary grant competition, the Secretary may consider, under 34 CFR 75.217(d)(3), the past performance of the applicant in carrying out a previous award, such as the applicant's use of funds, achievement of project objectives, and compliance with grant conditions. The Secretary may also consider whether the applicant failed to submit a timely performance report or submitted a report of unacceptable quality.

In addition, in making a competitive grant award, the Secretary requires various assurances, including those applicable to Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department (34 CFR 100.4, 104.5, 106.4, 108.8, and 110.23).

All applications submitted to the FY 2024 AORC program competition will be evaluated and scored by peer reviewers with expertise in area studies, modern foreign languages, global competencies, and postgraduate research.

The Department's G6 e-Reader system will produce the rank order listing of all applications in the competition based on the scores that peer reviewers assigned to the selection criteria. In situations where two or more applications are tied with the same overall score in the

rank order listing, we will use the scores for selection criterion (a) Need for the project as a tiebreaker. If this criterion does not resolve the tied scores, we will use the scores for criterion (c) Quality of project services as the tiebreaker.

3. Risk Assessment and Specific Conditions: Consistent with 2 CFR 200.206, before awarding grants under this program, the Department conducts a review of the risks posed by applicants. Under 2 CFR 200.208, the Secretary may impose specific conditions and, under 2 CFR 3474.10, in appropriate circumstances, high-risk conditions on a grant if the applicant or grantee is not financially stable; has a history of unsatisfactory performance; has a financial or other management system that does not meet the standards in 2 CFR part 200, subpart D; has not fulfilled the conditions of a prior grant; or is otherwise not responsible.

4. Integrity and Performance System: If you are selected under this competition to receive an award that, over the course of the project period may exceed the simplified acquisition threshold (currently \$250,000), under 2 CFR 200.206(a)(2) we must make a judgment about your integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards--that is, the risk posed by you as an applicant--before we make an award. In doing so, we must consider any information about you that is in the integrity and performance system (currently referred to as the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)), accessible through the System for Award Management. You may review and comment on any information about yourself that a Federal agency previously entered and that is currently in FAPIIS.

Please note that, if the total value of your currently active grants, cooperative agreements, and procurement contracts from the Federal Government exceeds \$10,000,000, the reporting requirements in 2 CFR part 200, Appendix XII, require you to report certain integrity information to FAPIIS semiannually. Please review the requirements in 2 CFR part 200, Appendix XII, if this grant plus all the other Federal funds you receive exceed \$10,000,000.

5. In General: In accordance with the Office of Management and

Budget's guidance located at 2 CFR part 200, all applicable Federal laws, and relevant Executive guidance, the Department will review and consider applications for funding pursuant to this notice inviting applications in accordance with:

- (a) Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an objective process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR 200.205);
- (b) Prohibiting the purchase of certain telecommunication and video surveillance services or equipment in alignment with section 889 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2019 (Pub. L. No. 115-232) (2 CFR 200.216);
- (c) Providing a preference, to the extent permitted by law, to maximize use of goods, products, and materials produced in the United States (2 CFR 200.322); and
- (d) Terminating agreements in whole or in part to the greatest extent authorized by law if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR 200.340).

VI. Award Administration Information

1. Award Notices: If your application is successful, we notify your U.S. Representative and U.S. Senators and send you a Grant Award Notification (GAN); or we may send you an email containing a link to access an electronic version of your GAN. We may notify you informally, also.

If your application is not evaluated or not selected for funding, we notify you.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements: We identify administrative and national policy requirements in the application package and reference these and other requirements in the Applicable Regulations section of this notice.

We reference the regulations outlining the terms and conditions of an award in the Applicable Regulations section of this notice and include these and other specific conditions in

the GAN. The GAN also incorporates your approved application as part of your binding commitments under the grant.

3. Open Licensing Requirements: Unless an exception applies, if you are awarded a grant under this competition, you will be required to openly license to the public grant deliverables created in whole, or in part, with Department grant funds. When the deliverable consists of modifications to pre-existing works, the license extends only to those modifications that can be separately identified and only to the extent that open licensing is permitted under the terms of any licenses or other legal restrictions on the use of pre-existing works. Additionally, a grantee or subgrantee that is awarded competitive grant funds must have a plan to disseminate these public grant deliverables. This dissemination plan can be developed and submitted after your application has been reviewed and selected for funding. For additional information on the open licensing requirements please refer to 2 CFR 3474.20.

4. Reporting: (a) If you apply for a grant under this program competition, you must ensure that you have in place the necessary processes and systems to comply with the reporting requirements in 2 CFR part 170 should you receive funding under the competition. This does not apply if you have an exception under 2 CFR 170.110 (b).

(b) At the end of your project period, you must submit a final performance report, including financial information, as directed by the Secretary. If you receive a multiyear award, you must submit an annual performance report that provides the most current performance and financial expenditure information as directed by the Secretary under 34 CFR 75.118. The Secretary may also require more frequent performance reports under 34 CFR 75.720(c). For specific requirements on reporting, please go to www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html.

Note: Grantees under this competition will submit their performance reports electronically using the International Resource Information System (IRIS), the web-based reporting system for the International and Foreign Language Education office. Information about the reporting system

and the AORC performance report instructions may be viewed at

<http://iris.ed.gov/iris/pdfs/AORC.pdf>.

5. Performance Measures: IFLE has established the following performance measure for the AORC program for the purpose of Department reporting under 34 CFR 75.110:

The number of individuals conducting postgraduate research utilizing the services of the overseas Centers.

6. Continuation Awards: In making a continuation award under 34 CFR 75.253, the Secretary considers, among other things: whether a grantee has made substantial progress in achieving the goals and objectives of the project; whether the grantee has expended funds in a manner that is consistent with its approved application and budget; and, if the Secretary has established performance measurement requirements, whether the grantee has made substantial progress in achieving the performance targets in the grantee's approved application.

In making a continuation award, the Secretary also considers whether the grantee is operating in compliance with the assurances in its approved application, including those applicable to Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department (34 CFR 100.4, 104.5, 106.4, 108.8, and 110.23).

VII. Other Information

Accessible Format: On request to the program contact person listed under FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT, individuals with disabilities can obtain this document and a copy of the application package in an accessible format. The Department will provide the requestor with an accessible format that may include Rich Text Format (RTF) or text format (txt), a thumb drive, an MP3 file, braille, large print, audiotape, or compact disc, or other accessible format.

Electronic Access to This Document: The official version of this document is the document published in the *Federal Register*. You may access the official edition of the *Federal Register* and the Code of Federal Regulations at www.govinfo.gov. At this site you can view this

document, as well as all other documents of this Department published in the *Federal Register*, in text or Portable Document Format (PDF). To use PDF you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free at the site.

You may also access documents of the Department published in the *Federal Register* by using the article search feature at www.federalregister.gov. Specifically, through the advanced search feature at this site, you can limit your search to documents published by the Department.

Nasser H. Paydar,
Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education.

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